Mentoring program bolsters student's confidence

TO THE MAX: Max Potential participant Jess Bantock welcomes new students to Mudgee High School. 090610/MANDURAH/3

By SAM PAINE

Jess Bantock is using her new confidence to inspire confidence in students preparing for high school.

As part of the Max Potential program, Jess is planning a community service project addressing year 6 students at Mudgee's public schools about the transition to secondary school.

Jess joined the program to become more confident in speaking and expressing her opinions as a member of the school's student representative council.

Max Potential begins by pairing young people with mentors who use their life experience and the program's Maximiser principles to help the students address problematic areas of their lives.

Three and a half months into the program, she said she had gone from shy to outspoken, and learned to be true to herself and not to worry about what her listeners thought of her.

Jess recently gave a five-minute talk on bullying to the school assembly, something she said she could never have managed six months ago.

To complete the program, Jess needs to put her new skills to use by organising a community project.

Jess has decided to take a group of students in year 10 and year 11to talk about high school with year 6 students and Mudgee Public School and Cudgegong Valley Public School.

While completing work experience at Cudgegong Valley Public School, Jess gave an informal talk and answered questions, which she said helped the students relax and calmed their fears.

Because every student goes through the somewhat intimidating transition to secondary school, she believes the project is a great way to benefit many Mudgee children.

New routes proposed to by-pass long coal trains

New routes out of Mudgee and Rylstone to ensure emergency services vehicles will not be delayed by long coal trains from the Cobbora mine would cost council an estimated $1.3 million, according to a report to be presented to Mid-Western Regional Council on Wednesday.

Council has investigated the cost of alternative routes for emergency service vehicles, in response to concerns that trains passing through railway level crossings could block vehicles travelling between Mudgee and Gulgong or Rylstone and Lue/Bylong.

Preliminary investigations have found that a 1.9 kilometre Mudgee bypass linking Fairydale Road with Hill End Road, would cost $900,000. This would allow emergency vehicles to travel from Mudgee to Gulgong and would also provide a shortcut from the north-west into the back of Bellevue Estate.

A proposal for an alternative route from Rylstone to Bylong/Lue via Louee Street would cost $400,000.

Although the alternative route from Rylstone would require only 300 metres of new road, it would require a concrete causeway across the Cudgegong River.

The route would pass through Crown land, so land acquisition costs are expected to be minimal.

Councillors at Wednesday's meeting will consider a recommendation to seek funding through submission or voluntary planning agreement (VPA) to construct the alternative routes.

Car returned to owner

A vehicle alleged to have been used for burnouts and/or street racing on Queens Pinch Road and was impounded has been released back to the owner following an application in Mudgee Local Court on Wednesday.

Solicitor Peter Orr, representing the vehicle's owner Jay Harris, in asking that the impounding be dispensed with told the court that the impounding was causing hardship to Harris' fiancee.

"Charges are to be laid, which will result in my client losing his licence," Mr Orr said.

"The hardship is that the impounding is stopping his fiance from getting to her employment."

Harris' fiance was present in court but was not named in the proceedings.

Mr Orr said the motor vehicle, a Nissan Skyline, was registered to Jay Harris.

Police Prosecutor Brett Donaghy said he had no objection if Mr Harris signed an undertaking not to drive.

Magistrate granted the application on the condition that Mr Harris makes that undertaking.

Mr Harris' fiance has stated that the vehicle was not "confiscated" as stated by the Mudgee Guardian last week, but was voluntarily surrendered to police.

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